

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in one or more the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network; and

the server using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the reporting feature extracts and analyzes information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes information from the customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates ~~includes means for generating~~ reports for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

2. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in one or more the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

wherein one or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the plurality of self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information; and

the server using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the rental transaction feature creates a rental agreement using information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, and wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

3. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units;

a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an automatic payment feature in communication with the inventory information capture

and customer information capture, the automatic payment feature having a credit card information capture to receive information regarding a credit card to be charged, wherein the automatic payment feature periodically applies rental charges to the credit card.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers;

a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture; and

a rate setting feature in communication with the inventory information capture, wherein the rate setting feature communicates a rental rate to the inventory information capture.

6. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an authorized access identifier.

7. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an emergency contact identifier.

8. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a payment history.

9. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a credit card identifier.

10. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the plurality of storage units comprises a first storage unit and a second storage unit, an automatic payment feature applied to the first storage unit, and an invoicing feature applied to the second storage unit.

11. (Previously presented) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 comprising a transfer feature that transfers a customer from an occupied self-storage unit to a

vacant self-storage unit.

12. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 11 comprising a fee calculator that calculates a prorated rent for the occupied room and a prorated rent for the vacant room.

13. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature includes an audit report.

14. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature includes a cash intake report.

15. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises data configured to be exported to an external financial database.

16. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the inventory information capture comprises a map.

17. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a receipt for self-storage transactions.

18. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a vacancy report.

19. (Previously presented) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a facility utilization report including facility revenue and occupancy information for evaluating the effect of a rental rate change on facility revenue.

20. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 further comprising a communication feature configured to allow communication between users.

21. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 further comprising a letter generation feature.

22. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 21 wherein upon occurrence of a predetermined criteria, the system generates a customer letter.

23. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an overdue fee.

24. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to a rate increase.

25. (Original) The automated self-storage system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an eviction.

26. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture.

27. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction.

28. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

29. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture, wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction and a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

30. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server and configured to create a rental agreement using information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units, and

the server using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the reporting feature extracts and analyzes information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes information from the customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates ~~includes means for~~ generating reports for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.